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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/538,744	03/30/2000	Edward Jason White	KCC-14,867	8894

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EXAMINER

GUARRIELLO, JOHN J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1771

DATE MAILED: 04/25/2003

16

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No. 09/538744	Applicant(s) White et al.
Examiner John Guarriello	Group Art Unit 1771

—The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address—

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Status

- ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 3/3/2003
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 29-42 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above claim(s) 29-38 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 39-42 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- ☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
- ☐ received.
- ☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____
- ☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Other _____

Office Action Summary

Art Unit: 1771

DETAILED ACTION

15. The Examiner acknowledges papers # 13-51, the extension of time, the fabric sample, the RCE, and the amendment of 3/3/2003.

Election/Restriction

16. Restriction is maintained as stated in paper # 12 of 10/22/2002. Non-elected claims 29-38 directed to method are withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

17. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

21. Claims 1, 39-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Holtman 4,578,070.

Holtman describes an absorbent structure with corrugated (which correspond to the claimed loops see Figure 2) web layers, (see abstract).

Art Unit: 1771

Holtman describes the fibrous layer in the form of a non-woven web which is corrugated in structure, identical to the loops, (Figure 2), or fibers, and identical to a z-direction, x-direction, and a y-direction of the claimed invention, (see Figures 2, 3A, and 3, column 2, lines 35-48). Holtman describes absorbent products corresponding to the claimed personal care product which are diapers, sanitary napkins, (column 3, lines 58-66; column 5, lines 50-53), and incontinent pads, (column 4, lines 40-43; Figure 3). Holtman describes a fibrous web with high loft, (column 5, lines 15-17). It is the Examiner's position that Holtman describes the essential limitations of the claimed invention. Claims lack novelty.

Applicant's arguments regarding the looped fibers have been considered, but it is the Examiner's position that no differential in distances from successive loops evidenced in the claim language as to distinguish from the loops of Holtman as shown in Figures 2, 6, and 8. Claims lack novelty.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Art Unit: 1771

18. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

19. Claims 2-14, 41-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Holtman 4,578,070 in view of EP 137 644.

Holtman describes an absorbent structure with corrugated (which corresponds to the claimed loops and has channels between the loops, see Figure 2) web layers, (see abstract). Holtman describes the fibrous layer in the form of a non-woven web which is corrugated in structure, corresponding to the claimed loops and the claimed channels between the loops, see Figure 2, or fibers, and identical to a z-direction, x-direction, and a y-direction of the claimed invention, (see Figures 2, 3A, and 3, column 2, lines 35-48).

Holtman describes absorbent products corresponding to the claimed personal care product which are diapers, sanitary napkins, (column 3, lines 58-66;

Art Unit: 1771

column 5, lines 50-53), and incontinent pads, (column 4, lines 40-43; Figure 3). Holtman describes a fibrous web with substantially high loft, (column 5, lines 15-17). Holtman differs from the claimed invention because it is silent about the channels being randomly spaced in the machine direction.

EP'644 describes loops defining the open spaces between the webs which are elliptical in shape and exemplify the claimed channels in the machine direction, see Figures 10 and 12 on page 4 of the Figure pages.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the non-woven web fibrous layer orientation of '070 with the second fibrous layer of EP'644 so as to exemplify the channels in the machine direction which correspond to an elliptical shape, see Figure 3A, elements 32A of Holtman '070, of the claimed invention motivated with the expectation EP'644 describes open spaces between the webs as shown in Figures 10 and 12, and that the rearranging the parts (corresponding to the layers of the fibrous materials in spatial relationship to each other) of an invention only involves routine skill in the absorbent article

Art Unit: 1771

art in order to achieve properties of improved absorbence, see In re Japikse, 86 USPQ 70.

Applicant's arguments, as noted in the response 7/24/2002, regarding the process limitation indicates a process-by-product consideration. Product-by-process claims are treated as products unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Since the product, as now amended in newly amended independent claim 2, appears to be the same or similar as the prior art of record it still would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art taking the invention as a whole. Moreover, with the language of channels in the instant claims, Figures 2, 6, and 8 of Holtman '070 describe channels, and with no criticality of depth or width in the claims of the instant invention the claimed invention would still be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Regarding the intended use as a filter this would be obvious to one of ordinary skill since Berrigan describes undulations transverse to webs for filter media, (column 1, lines 63-67).

Art Unit: 1771

20. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John J. Guarriello whose telephone number is 703-308-3209. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris, can be reached on (703) 308-2414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-305-5408.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.



John J. Guarriello:gj

Patent Examiner

April 10, 2003

April 17, 2003



TERREL MORRIS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1700